

THE FESTSCHRIFT

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In the autumn of 2005 the New Zealand Asia Institute (NZAI), University of Auckland, graciously extended invitations to more than two scores of scholars working on Southeast Asia to participate in an international conference themed 'Southeast Asia: Past, Present and Future'. NZAI's initiative was to honour and celebrate the 75th birthday of Emeritus Professor Nicholas Tarling. The event became a reality when 45 scholars from various corners of the world convened on 1-3 February 2006 at the Langham Hotel, Auckland to join in an international conference honouring a learned and esteemed colleague. Professor Wang Gungwu, director of the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore delivered the keynote address 'Southeast Asia: Imperial Themes', a topic undoubtedly intimate to Tarling's career and interests as a professional historian. Over a three-day conference 34 speakers presented their work on topics and issues relating to Southeast Asia followed by energetic, critical, sometimes provocative, and thoughtful discussions.

A collection of twenty essays drawn from the papers presented at the aforesaid conference comprised this festschrift that celebrates Emeritus Professor Nicholas Tarling's more than half a century of scholarly contributions to Southeast Asian studies primarily to the region's historical development. The edited essays in this single volume represent the works and specialties from some of the most renowned scholars in the field. Amongst the contributors are Tarling's former students as well as past and current colleagues. This festschrift is a tribute to a scholar of impeccable standing that is greatly acknowledged within academic circles and is here reflected in the international panel of contributors that included academics from Southeast Asia itself.

The essays presented here cut across various disciplines and numerous themes ranging from early eighteenth century diplomatic intercourse, the

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transformation of the concept of traditional kingship, twentieth century communist theory of colonial revolution, to Islamic radicalism, sexual harassment in the workplace, natural history and colonial science, and other interesting, intriguing and thought-provoking pieces. Historians undoubtedly dominate amongst contributors but colleagues from fields such as anthropology, economics, political science, international relations, management also present their work.

Themes for Thought on Southeast Asia hopefully will generate greater interest and encourage further research undertakings and writing about the above mentioned ideas, themes, topics and proposals.

Dianne Lewis reviews the late David Kenneth Bassett's unpublished doctoral thesis (London, 1955) 'The Factory of the English East India Company at Bantam, 1602-1682' as well as his published works including *The British in South-East Asia during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Hull, 1990). Lewis observes that the British played merely 'supporting roles' in the early stages of involvement when they lacked the means (read 'arms') to 'command the market'. But it was the British intention in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to trade and they succeeded prominently in capturing a share of the Southeast Asian market through the activities of private traders ('country traders'). Private British traders were actively involved in the region's commerce until 1786 when one amongst them, Francis Light, successfully manoeuvred all parties involved to his personal advantage to establish Penang in the name of 'His Britannic Majesty King George III of England and the Honourable English East India Company'.

Ferdinand C. Llanes in a detailed account of a Spanish ambassador's visit to the Court of Ayudhya in the summer of 1718 explores the interactions between a European power (Spain) and a self-centred Southeast Asian kingship (Siam). The crux of the diplomatic situation was primarily 'on the kind of reception the [Spanish] embassy sought' from Ayudhyan Siam. In focusing on the antics of the aggressive and shrewd behaviour of Alexandro Bustamante, ambassador plenipotentiary, Llanes seeks to demonstrate that diplomatic relations between eighteenth century Spain and Siam was a two-way process, neither able to gain an edge over the other. At the same time this study reveals the assertiveness as well as pragmatism of the Ayudhya court in dealing with Westerners.

My-Van Tran recollects the vain struggle of Prince Cường Đê (1882-1951) for Vietnam's independence from colonial (French and Japanese) rule. Prince Cường Đê was a direct male descendant of Crown Prince Cảnh, the eldest son of Emperor Gia Long who established the Nguyễn dynasty (1802-1945),

the last imperial house of Vietnam. Based on her larger work, *A Vietnamese Royal Exile in Japan: Prince Cuong De, 1882-1951* (London: Routledge, 2005), Tran poignantly evoke the unfulfilled aspirations, false promises, and basically the sense of helplessness and hopelessness of a personal quest that stretched over 46 years. The most touching note is the utterance of Ngô Đình Diệm (1901-1963), later president of South Vietnam (1954-1963), who reportedly was down on his knees to address his prince: 'Majesty, you should have been king'. Thereafter Prince Cường Để shed tears.

Danny Wong Tze Ken looks at the role and efforts of George Cathcart Woolley, an officer of the North Borneo Chartered Company Administration in North Borneo (present day Sabah) who succeeded in publishing a compilation of the customs and traditions of three non-Muslim ethnic groups, viz. Dusun, Murut and Kwijau. Despite his and his native assistants' protracted mission to have the collated customs printed as codes, all six booklets published as Native Affairs Bulletins No. 1-6 'were never accepted as legal binding or being widely received even by the community of native chiefs' resulting in native customs and laws remaining uncodified and varied from area to area. Nonetheless Wong points to the significance of Woolley's six volumes and another by Pangeran Osman in throwing light on the social life of native groups of Sabah during their transformation to the modern world.

Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian put forth the interesting thesis that the brief period of the Japanese occupation of Malaya (1941-1945) and Japanese wartime policies towards the Malay sultans and *rakyat* (masses) 'had more than any other factors succeeded in stripping the royal institution of its mystique and grandeur to the level that it no longer commanded fear and/or undisputed reverence among the postwar indigenous elite'. The Japanese period also demonstrated that the very existence of the Malay monarchy was dependent on good relations with those in power. Indeed Kobkua argues that the Japanese occupation transformed the concept of Malay kingship and raises the socio-political consciousness of the Malay elite as well as arming them with invaluable lessons in dealing with their royalty in the postwar period.

Cheah Boon Kheng in a thoughtful and analytical manner brings together the various developments in postwar Malaya/Malaysia, viz. the communist insurgency (the so-called 'Emergency'), British decolonization, the struggle for *merdeka* (independence), ethnic relations, and the politics of nation-building in independent Malaya/Malaysia. Basically Cheah evaluates the impact and legacy of the communist insurgency in the peninsula as well as in Sarawak on the nation-building process. This study reveals the contradictions

of human actions: whilst authoritarian measures were imperative and essential in suppressing communist subversion, such measures and powers remained intact and continued to be used long after the communist threat had subsided and consequently curbed human rights and impeded the emergence of civil society in contemporary Malaysia.

Dov Bing's exploration of the genesis of the colonial revolution in the Dutch East Indies focuses on the crucial role played by the Dutch revolutionary Marxist Hendricus Sneevliet. Bing analyses the developments between the Indisch Sociaal Democratische Vereniging (ISDV) and the Sarekat Islam that subsequently led to the Second Congress of the Comintern (July 1920) at which the Committee on the National and Colonial Questions was convened that dealt with the crucial issue of the theory of colonial revolution. It was Sneevliet again, at Lenin's behest, who played a pivotal role in the birth of the Chinese Communist Party (1921) as well as forging the first united front (1923-1926) between the communists and the Guomintang (Kuomintang).

J. Thomas Lindblad utilizes two case studies, one in West Sumatra and another in North Sumatra, to demonstrate the linkages in developments prior to and after the nationalization of Dutch enterprises in post-independent Indonesia in the late 1950s. Special attention is given to the process of *indonesianisasi*, viz. the appointment of Indonesians in managerial and supervisory positions in former Dutch-controlled enterprises. Both case studies illustrate the process of economic decolonization drawing on comparisons from the two experiences.

Sivachandralingam Sundara Raja attempts to unravel the reasons behind the problematic relations between Charles Alma Baker, a native of New Zealand, and British officials of the Federated Malay States (FMS) during the 1890s and 1910s. Ironically, in a period when the British Colonial Office in London was encouraging investments in the western Malay States in commercial agriculture and mining enterprises, Baker, on the other hand, faced a series of obstacles from British FMS officials. Raja focuses on this apparently maverick status of Baker to reveal the relations between Western entrepreneurs and colonial officials in a fast booming British Malaya at the turn of the twentieth century.

Steven Drakeley analyzes the political motives behind the ceremony at the Presidential Palace in Jakarta on 1 April 1965 when the Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's largest modernist Islamic organization, bestowed upon President Sukarno the Bintang Muhammadiyah or the Muhammadiyah Medal in recognition of his services to the organization. Although a simple event, there were apparently many political undercurrents to be read between the lines

particularly the hidden agenda of both parties where *real politik* was played out. Drakeley unravels the behaviours of both Sukarno and the Muhammadiyah leadership over an event that less than a year after resulted in an overhaul of the Indonesian political landscape.

Iik A. Mansurnoor examines in detail the process of Islamic revivalism and radicalism in Southeast Asia. Drawing from numerous core ideas of the religion and references to historical events related to revivalist, reformist and radical movements amongst Southeast Asian Muslims, Iik argues that radicalism represents but a facet and not the pattern or norm of Islamic revivalism or reformism. Furthermore ‘To view Islamic history as the unfolding of outright and categorical agenda of violence misses the pristine message of Islam as a religion for all humanity,’ but on the other hand, ‘to maintain that Islam has no “illegitimate children” in history in the form of “war mongers” and “radicals or terrorists” is to censor history’.

Graeme MacRae in looking at the election of local heads of government in Bali, Indonesia, in 2005, attempts to offer a view of how ordinary people understood elections, their interpretation of the meaning of the election process, and locates this ‘political’ process termed ‘election’ in the socio-cultural context of contemporary Balinese society. MacRae contends that history to a large extent explains and determines present day politics in Bali, indeed in all of Indonesia, which ‘are deeply conditioned by affiliations and loyalties whose socio-political roots go back generations if not centuries; are informed by modes of cultural expression and visual style rooted in an equally venerable past’.

Amarjit Kaur explores the historical development of labour migration in Southeast Asia, examines contract labour systems and border controls, and reviews recent developments (since 1980s) on migration streams, recruitment modes and state immigration policies. Amarjit utilizes Malaya/Malaysia as a case study to highlight the various main themes and issues discussed skilfully linking the past with recent and contemporary developments on the labour front.

Maimunah Aminuddin examines the Malaysian employment relations framework in the private sector, the engineer of the country’s economy, focusing on three key areas of primary concern, namely the trade union movement’s strength, the security of employment for workers, and the state authorities’ policy on addressing sexual harassment in the workplace. Although Malaysia enjoys industrial harmony, Maimunah attributes this achievement to dispensing with workers’ freedom of association. This

analysis reveals that the trade union movement in Malaysia unless able to re-energize or re-invent itself, is on the way out of the employment scene.

Anthony Shome attempts to present Singapore's state-guided entrepreneurship as a positive model for transitional economies. The origin of state-guided entrepreneurship in the island republic furnishes the historical background. Temasek Holdings, seen as the custodian of the state-guided entrepreneurship ideal, is used as an illustration (its management and performance are discussed) to support the merits of the proposed theory of state-guided entrepreneurship. Three hypotheses—political underwriting, surety of collateral and collective global thrust—are put forth in support of the proposed model for transitional economies.

J. Kathirithamby-Wells asserts that natural history as the cornerstone of trade and the development of commercial agriculture contributed to Western expansion and scientific knowledge. Peninsular Malaysia, owing to its strategic location in the tropics, contributed substantially to natural history thence to colonial science. Natural history undeniably served the aims of imperial expansion and colonialism but at the same time contributed to the discipline of biological sciences that inherited a legacy of a rich database over the centuries. In linking natural history to environmental change, climate change and forest depletion—contemporary concerns worldwide—Kathirithamby-Wells pays long-overdue recognition to natural history in the historiography of post-colonial nation states like Malaysia and elsewhere.

Sho Kuwajima in looking at eyewitness accounts, contemporary reports, and newspapers particularly from the Japanese community, attempts to reconstruct the events of the Indian Mutiny in Singapore in 1915. Interestingly Kuwajima draws parallels between the actions of the men of the Fifth Light Infantry in Singapore and Malay peasants who rose up against the British in Kelantan, a British protectorate on the northeast part of the peninsula. Written as a postscript to his book *The Mutiny in Singapore: War, Anti-War and the War for India's Independence* (New Delhi: Rainbow Publishers, 2006), Kuwajima in the present essay appends a note that recollects his personal experience and his 'idea of war and anti-war'.

James Kember traces New Zealand's diplomatic representation in Southeast Asia in the postwar decades of 1950s and 1960s. Drawing largely from diplomatic and other official documents from the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kember offers an insightful perspective into the motives, considerations, internal and external pressures, geopolitical concerns, and internal politicking that determined the establishment of Auckland's diplomatic presence in Southeast Asia. Particularly revealing was that costs

and expenditure in maintaining missions abroad featured alongside political and strategic considerations: 'that the departmental files of the period often seem as full of messages about costs of offices and housing as they were then about the substance of the work'.

Nicole Tarulevicz identifies and discusses the host of problems facing Singaporean historiography. Primarily the concern is on the republic's management of history: 'the process by which the Singaporean state attempts to construct narratives through which Singaporeans should understand their history'. This critical analysis reveals the extent that state authorities could use history to serve their agenda.

Ooi Keat Gin argues for the essential need for the teaching of Southeast Asian Studies in tertiary institutions across the region in order to promote greater understanding amongst the nation states. It is imperative that members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the regional organization established in 1967, become more conscious of one another as they collectively face other regional blocs in the twenty-first century of globalization. Southeast Asian scholars need to go beyond their parochial and nationalistic mindset and to promote greater cooperation and joint intellectual pursuits with one another in the region. Southeast Asian Studies as an area studies discipline needs to be revitalized in the region itself.